

## YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The job of cleaning up after your pet can be as simple as taking a plastic bag or pooper scooper along on your next walk. What should you do with the waste you pick up? No solution is perfect, but here are the choices:

### 1 Flush it down the toilet . . .



The water from your toilet goes to a septic system or sewage treatment plant that removes most pollutants before the water reaches a lake or stream.

To prevent plumbing problems, don't try to flush debris such as rocks, sticks or cat litter. Cat feces may be scooped out and flushed down the toilet, but used litter should be put in a securely closed bag in the trash.

### 2 Bury it in the yard . . .



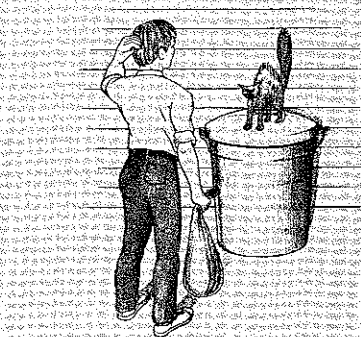
Dig a hole or trench that is:

- About 5 inches deep;
- Away from vegetable gardens;
- Away from any lake, stream, ditch or well.

Microorganisms in the top layer of soil will break down the waste and release nutrients to fertilize nearby plants.

Be cautious. Keep pet waste away from vegetable gardens and water supplies to prevent disease. Don't add pet waste to your compost pile. The pile won't get hot enough to kill disease organisms in pet waste.

### 3 Put it in the trash . . .



Check local ordinances first.

Putting pet waste in the trash is against the law in some communities. Even if legal and easy, it is not the best solution. Waste taken to landfill or incinerator can still cause pollution problems.

Another option is to install an underground pet waste digester that works like a small septic tank. Before buying one, check local laws that may restrict their use, design or location.

## A few words of caution

**Around Your Home** – If you leave pet waste to decay in your yard, be sure it does not become a problem. To prevent water pollution, clean up areas near wells, storm drains, ditches and waterways. Always remove waste from areas where children play. They are the most frequent victims of diseases from pet waste. Of course, the best protection for children and adults is washing hands with soap and water.

**In Your Community** – Many communities have "pooper scooper" laws that govern pet waste cleanup. Some of these laws specifically require anyone who takes an animal off their property to carry a bag, shovel, or pooper scooper. Any waste left by the animal must be cleaned up immediately. Call your city or village clerk to find out more about local pet waste laws.

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